

Message Text

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R 192000B MAY 77
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AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SUVA 0629

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GN, XP
SUBJECT: SCHEDULE SET FOR TUVALU INDEPENDENCE

REF: SUVA 0608

1. FOLLOWING EMERGED FROM MY RECENT DISCUSSION WITH THOMAS LAYNG, BRITISH COMMISSIONER OF TUVALU (FORMERLY ELICE ISLANDS) WHEN HE PASSED THROUGH SUVA ENROUTE TO UK ON LEAVE:

2. SCHEDULE HMG AND TUVALU LEADERSHIP HAVE DRAWAN UP FOR STEPS LEADING TO INDEPENDENCE OF TINY COUNTRY 710,000 INHABITANTS SPREAD OVER ONE MILLION SQ. MI.) ENVISAGES NEW ELECTIONS AUGUST 1977, AFTER LAYNG'S RETURN, CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE IN LONDON FEBRUARY 1978, INDEPENDENCE OCTOBER 1978.

3. CONSTITUTION EXPECTED TO BE STANDARD WESTMINISTER MODEL WITH FEW CHANGES EXCEPT FIRST GOVERNOR GENERAL OF DOMINION WILL BE TUVALAN RATHER THAN BRITON, AS HAS BEEN PRACTICE IN MOST

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SUVA 00629 200041Z

FORMER BRITISH COLONIES.

4. COMMISSIONER EXPECTED TUVALU APPLY FOR UN MEMBERSHIP AFTER INDEPENDENCE. HMG GENTLY PUSHING IDEA OF AREA UN REPRESENTATION FOR MINISCULE EMERGING STATES SUCH AS GILBERTS, TUVALU, TAKELAUS, NIUE, RATHER THAN EXPENSIVE INDIVIDUAL DELEGATIONS.

5. HMG HOPES, AS IN CASE OF GILBERTS, TO RESOLVE PRESS INDEPENDENT STATUS OF ISLANDS WHOSE SOVEREIGNTY UNDER DISPUTE WITH USG, INCLUDING CAPITAL, FUNAFUTI.

6. LAYNG BELIEVES TOALIPI LAUTI, PRESENTLY CHIEF MINISTER, HAS EXCELLENT CHANCE OF BECOMING PRIME MINISTER AFTER AUGUST ELECTIONS. COMMISSIONER DESCRIBES HIM AS SOUND, SLOW THINKER, ABLE, SOMEWHAT ANTI-EUROPEAN SINCE BEING PASSED OVER FOR PROMOTION SCHOOL TEACHER SOME YEARS AGO. LAYNG WOULD PREFER TO SEE PRESENT FINANCIAL SECRETARY DEFEAT LAUTI SINCE HE BELIEVES HIM BRIGHTER, MORE ABLE.

7. DURING FORTHCOMING VISIT OF LAUTI TO U.S. ON IV GRANT (REFTEL), COMMISSIONER EXPECTS HIM TO RAISE QUESTION OF FUNDS TO FILL IN HUGE HOLES EXCAVATED BY U.S. DURING WORLD WAR II ON FUNAFUTI TO PROVIDE FOR AIRSTRIP. LAUTI APPARENTLY HAS COMPILED A \$20 MILLION SHOPPING LIST, ACCORDING LAYNG, WHICH HE PLANS PRESENT AT CONFERENCE HE HOPES TO ORGANIZE. CHIEF MIN WILL POINT TO LARGE U.S. OUTLAYS FOR MICRONESIA AND AMERICAN SAMOA, COMMISSIONER SAID, AND MAY ENDEAVOR USE AID REQUESTS AS LEVERAGE (IN MANNER UNCLEAR TO ME) FOR RESOLUTION DISPUTED ISLANDS QUESTION.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

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